A CASE FOR CONGRESS-LEAGUE UNITY

by

Sajjad Zaheer

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N.L.D.S.

FOREWARD

Hindu-Muslim unity is the supreme issue before the country today. It is the key to the political deadlock. What is it which stands in the way of unity? Not so much differences on any fundamental principles as mutual distrust and suspicion between Congressmen and Leaguers. Congressmen generally fail to see the anti-imperialist, liberationist role of the Muslim League, fail to see that the demand for Muslim self-determination or Pakistan is a just, progressive and national demand, and is the positive expression of the very freedom and democracy for which Congressmen have striven and undergone so much suffering all these years. They do not yet see that by accepting the principle of Pakistan, they would be doing exactly what a democrat should and must do—i.e., affirm the right of every people to be the masters of its own destiny, to mould its future according to its own free will. They do not yet see that this affirmation is the only guarantee of maintaining mutual co-operation, friendship and trust among the main sections of the Indian people. On the other hand, Muslim Leaguers are haunted by the fear of Hindu domination and refuse to see the great democratic basis of the Congress, its constant efforts to satisfy the just and legitimate demands of the various sections of our people. They do not see that Congress patriots, the best and the tallest among them, have moved towards them, and that if the League put forward its demand of Pakistan as a democratic and national demand, and, as the second largest patriotic organisation in the country, make the demand for the release of Congress leaders one of the planks of its democratic agitation, it would take a big step forward towards its goal of self-determination and help the country as a whole to achieve a composite National Government which would fight famine and disease and defend India against the Jap aggressors.

In the following articles, reprinted from the *People's War*, an attempt has been made to analyse recent Muslim League politics and trace the growth of national consciousness among Indian Muslims from a democratic perspective. I hope it will help to bring Congress and League patriots nearer each other.

SAJJAD ZAHEER

Bombay,
March, 1944.

Muslim League And Indian Freedom

Landmarks in the Growth of Hindu-Muslim Unity

THERE is a general impression among a large number of Congress patriots that the Muslim League and its leadership are irreconcilable communalists, who do not hesitate to sacrifice the general interests of the country as a whole, for their sectional and selfish interests. The Muslim demand of Pakistan is thought of merely as a stunt, or worse still, as inspired by British Imperialism in order to break the unity of the country and to perpetuate the political subjection and economic exploitation of India by Imperialism.

Having formed this view of the League and its demand of Pakistan, Congress patriots refuse to have anything to do with the League. They declare that unity with it is impossible.

A brief review, however, of the main landmarks in the history of Hindu-Muslim relations, since the foundation of the League 38 years ago, will show that the Pakistan demand of Indian Muslims *is the logical expression of the development of political consciousness among the Muslim peoples of India,* and that it has grown together with the development of the national movement for freedom as a whole.

BIRTH OF MUSLIM LEAGUE

The Muslim League was founded in the year 1906. The main political demand which it put forward at that time was that in the new scheme of Reforms foreshadowed by Lord Minto, Muslims must be given separate electorates and their seats should be reserved in the legislatures. Many nationalists believe that it is this principle of separatism which cut at the root of the development of a united Indian nation. They think it was an imperialist device to prevent the anti-imperialist unity of India.

The fact that there were pro-imperialist elements in the League and that division and disunity is in the interests of Imperialists, is used as an argument to prove the above contention. What is not realised is that the Hindu-Muslim prob-

lem is not the creation of imperialists. It exists because of certain historical reasons but is made use of by imperialists. Just as it is in imperialism's interests to use it in its favour, similarly it is in our interests to solve it so that we can turn the situation in our favour and isolate imperialism.

Was the demand of separate electorates and reservation of seats made by the League in 1907 and in subsequent years, an unjust and anti-democratic demand? The answer to this question can only be given if we examine the condition of Muslims at that time, and relate it to the general political situation in the country.

After the establishment of British rule in India and the events of 1857, the areas in which the largest industrial, commercial and educational development took place were Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The areas in which Muslims predominated were, comparatively speaking, left backward and undeveloped. These areas were Punjab, Eastern Bengal, N. W. F. P., Sind and Baluchistan. Furthermore, due to historical causes Muslims were behind in availing themselves of the facilities of modern education. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan estimated that in 1893 the number of Muslim graduates was 546 as against 4,987 Hindu graduates.

Now, if we bear in mind the fact that the franchise at that time was based on property qualifications and that only educated persons were eligible for election, it is obvious that the only way in which the newly-educated Muslim middle classes could hope to serve their people was by securing separate electorates. Looked at in the background of these facts it becomes clear that the demand for separate electorates, at this stage of our political evolution, was a just demand, for it was the only democratic method through which the educated and enlightened Muslim middle class could protect the interests of the Muslim people.

It was a demand for self-development and self-expression of a section of our countrymen who were economically and politically more backward than those inhabitants of our country whose urge for freedom was represented by the Indian National Congress.

However, within five years of the formation of the Muslim League (1912) its aim was changed to "the attainment under the aegis of the British Crown of a system of self-government suitable to India." The dismemberment of Turkey, the attack of Tsarist Russia on Persia, the sufferings of Muslims in Malaya, stirred the anti-imperialist sentiments of Indian Muslims. Abul Kalam Azad through his Urdu Weekly *Al-Hilal*, and Mohammed Ali, through his English weekly *Comrade*, were asking the Muslims to stand up for freedom. There was

a great political stir at the M. A. O. College, Aligarh. A Muslim Medical Mission, led by Dr. M. A. Ansari, was sent to Turkey during the Balkan War.

The adoption by the League of the aim of self-government, which the Congress had accepted in 1904, brought the two political organisations of the country very close together. The *events of the Great War accelerated this process.* Leaders of the Congress and League got into touch with each other; Congress and League met at the same time in Bombay in 1915. The President of the League then was the famous Muslim Congressman of Behar, Mr. Mazharul Huq, and negotiations for settlement of the Hindu-Muslim question were started between the two organisations.

These negotiations culminated in the agreement between the Congress and the League, which was ratified in the Open Session of the two bodies held at Lucknow in 1916. It was as a result of this Pact that, when the Secretary of State for India Mr. Montague visited India in 1917, the Congress and the League were able to present a joint front to him. Imperialist reactionaries were alarmed by this unity. Lord Sydenham, termed it a "dangerous conspiracy" and strove to prove that it was inspired by German agents!

THE CONGRESS-LEAGUE PACT OF 1916

Now if we examine the salient features of the Congress-League Pact of 1916, there again we find that it is the rights of the growing *Muslim* peoples of the Punjab and Bengal, a share in the Central Government and full protection of Muslim minorities living in non-Muslim areas, which figure prominently. It was agreed that Muslims should have separate electorates and that the number of their seats in the provincial legislatures should be fixed. In the Punjab, they were to get one-half of the total elected seats and in Bengal, forty per cent. In the Central Legislature their number was to be one-third of the total number of elected members; and no legislation affecting Muslim interests could be passed if three-fourths of the Muslim members opposed it.

These Muslim demands accepted by the Congress, reflect firstly, the rise of the Muslim peoples of the Punjab and Bengal to a prominent position in the political life of their homelands. Considering that the electorate for the legislature was still a *restricted one* and the stage for *full democratic independence* had not yet arrived, this provision of the pact gave a correct expression to the political development of these Muslim areas at this stage.

Secondly, the two provisions regarding the Centre—reservation of one-third of the seats in the Central Legislature and safeguard against legislation injurious to Muslims—are the

expression of the demand, put up for the first time, of equality of smaller nationalities in a federal constitution, a democratic safeguard to protect the interests of the weaker and smaller nationalities from the bigger and more developed nations of a single federation.

The period of Hindu-Muslim unity which followed the Lucknow Pact has been hailed by the Muslim League historian, Mohammad Noman, in the following words:

> "The League and the Congress stood on one platform for some years, fighting for a common destiny and for a common goal, all for the glory of the motherland." (*Muslim India*, p. 160).

Congress-League unity achieved in 1916 began to grow, so that finally when the war ended and was followed in India by the Rowlatt Act, the Punjab atrocities and acute economic distress, the Indian people as a whole were roused. Events outside India—the great Russian Revolution and the liberation movements in the Eastern Countries, the carving up of the Turkish Empire among the Imperialist Powers—were powerfully affecting the Indian people. A big mass movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das, etc., of the Congress, and the Muslim League leaders—the Ali Brothers, Dr. Ansari, Abul Kalam Azad, etc.—swept the country.

The three slogans of this movement were Swaraj, repeal of the Rowlatt Act and Khilafat—i.e., independence of the Near Eastern and Arabian Muslim lands. No period in the history of our struggle for freedom is more glorious than the Swaraj-Khilafat period. The two great national organisations—Congress and League or the Khilafat Conference—held their meetings together. Hindu and Muslim leaders appeared side by side on the same platform; thousands of Hindus and Muslims participated in the non-cooperation movement jointly launched by the Congress, the Muslim League and the Khilafat Committee.

Here again let us examine what was it that moved the Muslim masses, what were their hopes and aspirations, what was it that they were fighting for? Obviously, for two things. Firstly, they were fighting for Swaraj—the elimination of imperialism from India. Secondly, over and above this, they were fighting, though still in a vague and undefined manner, for the freedom of the Muslim peoples, the Muslim nationalities of India.

This is the real core of the Swaraj-Khilafat objective which the Muslim patriots had in front of them. True, the Khilafat movement wore a religious garb, in that it talked of restoration of all Islamic lands under one Khalif, but it was

not this which stirred the Muslim masses of India. What moved them was the anti-imperialist movement of brother Islamic peoples outside India, and their own national anti-imperialist consciousness.

And it was just because Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress leadership realised this and made the redress of the Khilafat wrong one of the objectives of the Congress struggle that the flood-gates of Hindu-Muslim unity were opened and imperialism was shaken to its very roots.

DISRUPTION APPEARS

But the non-cooperation movement failed, mainly because the leadership of the movement was not able to place before the people a clear-cut democratic programme. Swaraj remained undefined; the democratic demands of workers and peasants, the right of self-determination of nationalities were not brought out as a part and parcel of the larger Indian struggle for freedom.

The failure of the non-cooperation movement brought in its trail disintegration and division among the progressive political parties—the Congress and the League. Congress was split between No-Changers and the Swarajists.

The Swarajist wing of the Congress under the leadership of Pandit Motilal Nehru entered the Central Legislature and at once the question of the revision of the constitution was raised there. Mr. Jinnah and his Muslim Party joined with the Congress in the Central Legislature on all main political issues. At the same time Congress realised the necessity of a Hindu-Muslim settlement so that a united national demand might be placed before the British Government. The Muslim League had also passed a resolution at its Bombay Session in December 1924, appointing a Committee to enter into negotiations with other parties for a settlement.

Now followed a spate of conferences and attempts at Hindu-Muslim settlement, but unity was still elusive. With the announcement of the appointment of the Simon Commission in 1927 a wave of indignation swept the country. The Congress and the Muslim League both condemned it and efforts were once again made for a settlement.

The Muslim demand crystallised itself in the fourteen points of Mr. Jinnah who had again succeeded in uniting behind this programme all the main Muslim politicians—the Leaguers, the Muslim Conference, the main body of Khilafat led by Maulana Muhammad Ali, and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema. Only the nationalist Muslims led by Dr. Ansari and Maulana Azad did not subscribe to the programme, but they too stood for a settlement with other Muslims. On behalf of the Congress the Nehru Report was drafted.

It is necessary here to examine the main Muslim demands at this period, their points of difference with the Nehru Report and why no settlement was arrived at in the All-Parties Conference held in Calcutta in 1928.

The Nehru Report recommended a federative system of Government where residuary powers were to be vested in the Centre; joint electorates, with reservation of seats for Muslims only in those provinces where they were in a minority. There was to be no reservation for Muslims in the Centre where they were to get about one-fourth of the total seats.

On the other hand, the main features of the Muslim demand were that residuary powers should be vested in the provinces. Sind, Baluchistan and N.W.F.P. should be constituted as separate provinces and enjoy all the political privileges of Indian provinces; Muslim majorities in the Punjab and Bengal were to be maintained; separate electorates for Muslims should be maintained till such time as they chose to abandon them; adequate statutory safeguards for the Muslim religion and Muslim culture in the future constitution of India should be given; in the Central Legislature, Muslim representation was to be not less than one-third.

Here we see more clearly than before the emergence of Muslim nationalities in the shape of the demand for the separation and equality of Muslim peoples of Sind, N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan, the demand for the independent existence and growth of the Muslim peoples of the Punjab and Bengal.

DEMAND FOR SELF-DETERMINATION

Now when the constitution of a free India was being drafted by the representatives of the Indian peoples, the various Muslim people came forward and demanded in this framework of independence guarantees for full and unhindered democratic freedom: demanded that it should be made clear by the dominant brother-Hindu nationalities what the freedom of India as a whole would mean for them, how it would be translated to mean freedom for themselves, what possibilities of growth and development it would open up for them.

Was it not for this very democratic freedom that Congress was fighting? Was not the great mass awakening produced in the country by the Congress itself, as the major political organisation, responsible to a very large extent for the growth of this democratic upsurge of the Muslim peoples of India? Just as a new national consciousness had developed among the various Hindu peoples of India—hitherto forgotten, suppressed, undeveloped or merged in big heterogenous units like the Andhras, the Tamils, the Maharashtrians, the Canarese, etc.,—

so also the growth of political consciousness was expressing itself in this national demand of the Muslim peoples.

And it was only by recognising this healthy democratic growth and assuring them the fullest freedom that their co-operation could be secured, unity built, and the next step forward taken by India as a whole.

This, unfortunately, was not done and the attempts to achieve unity failed. The result of this disunity was that when the Congress launched its Civil Disobedience struggle in 1930 and 1932 Muslims as a whole were not moved by it.

At the time of the Round Table Conference and after the Communal Award, attempts were again made for unity, but they again proved to be unfruitful. And thus the situation drifted on till 1937 when the new Constitution was ushered in.

After the sweeping Congress victories at the polls and the formation of one-party Congress ministries in Congress majority provinces, exactly the opposite of what the Congress expected happened. Instead of Hindu-Muslim unity being established inside the Congress, Muslim masses drew further and further away from it.

A revival of the Muslim League took place. The anti-imperialist sentiment of the Muslim masses expressed itself through the new creed of the Muslim League which now became:

> *"the achievement of full independence in the form of free democratic states in which the rights and interests of Mussalmans are adequately and effectively safeguarded in the Constitution."*

Here again we notice that when the question of Indian independence is put on the order of the day, the demand of the Muslim nationalities is expressed in terms of their own freedom, viz., that the future Indian federation shall be one of "free democratic states."

During the period of Congress ministries the Hindu-Muslim problem not only remained unsolved, but took on a worse shape, so that, when the war broke out in September, 1939, and consequently Congress ministries resigned, the League actually went to the extent of celebrating a 'Day of Deliverance.'

War made the question of Indian freedom an immediate issue. Still Congress and League were unable to unite as they did in 1916. When the Congress demanded immediate independence and the right to call a Constituent Assembly, the Muslim League in its Lahore Session in 1940 passed the famous Pakistan resolution which demanded autonomy and sovereignty of the Muslim majority areas of the North-western and Eastern

zones of India. The war and the menace of invasion by Fascist Japan demanded immediate unity between these two major political organisations, but they failed to unite even during the time of the Cripps negotiations with the result that the imperialist reactionaries were able to deny all power to India.

Since then the situation has continued to grow worse; acute economic distress, famine and epidemics ravage the country; the bureaucracy continues to heap one disaster after another on us; but because of continued disunity, India's national organisations, the Congress and the League, are deprived of the opportunity to serve their people in this period of grave peril.

PATH TO FREEDOM

What then is the way out? How can our two national organisations find a common tongue? All that has been written above should prove that the progress of the Muslims and the Muslim League, from separate electorates and separate representation, to autonomy and residuary powers for Muslim provinces and then to self-determination and Pakistan is not to be regarded as the growth of reaction and communalism, but as the growing expression of the various stages of national, democratic and anti-imperialist urge of the developing Muslim nationalities of India.

This demand has grown, has become clearer and more concrete, together with the general growth of the Indian national movement towards freedom. There is no reason to regard this urge as a hindrance to the general national movement. As the great Urdu poet Dr. Iqbal said in his presidential address of the Muslim League in 1932:

> *"If the principle that the Indian Muslim is entitled to full and free development on the lines of his own culture and tradition in his own Indian homelands is recognised as the basis of a permanent communal settlement, he will be ready to stake his all for the freedom of India."*

Looked at in this light it is quite clear that, fundamentally, Congress and League stand very close to each other today, even though outwardly they seem to be far apart. Both stand for complete independence of India, both believe in the democratic principle of self-determination. Both represent the finest and highest aspirations of various nationalities which inhabit our land.

If, therefore, Congressmen see the Muslim demand of Pakistan in this light, and if Muslim Leaguers adopt progressive, popular and democratic programmes for their ministries

and their organisation generally a situation will be created when unity between these organisations would become inevitable. To that noble end every Indian patriot must direct all his efforts, all his energies.

(From *People's War*, January 23, 1944)

Pakistan - A Just Demand

Four years ago, on March 26, 1940, the All-India Muslim League passed the famous resolution on Pakistan at Lahore. For the first time since the glorious days of the Khilafat movement, Indian Muslims declared openly and unequivocally their wish to be sovereign and independent, to mould and build their life in their own way to rid themselves completely of British Imperialism.

However, to the average Congress patriot, Pakistan appeared to be a black-mailing device of "reactionary" Muslim leaders to secure concessions, or worse still, it was considered to be an imperialist plan to divide and weaken the nation so that its hold over the country might be maintained. He, therefore, refused to countenance the Pakistan demand at all. He failed to notice that the slogan of Pakistan was rousing the same emotions in the hearts of millions of his Muslim fellow-countrymen as that of Independence in his own heart.

Was this attitude towards Pakistan justified? Let us examine the Lahore resolution itself. It states that,

> "no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustment, as may be necessary, that the areas in which Muslims are numerically in a *majority as in the North Western and Eastern zones* of India should be grouped to constitute 'Independent State,' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.",

Or in the words of Mr. Jinnah:

> "We want the establishment of completely independent states in the North West and Eastern zones of India with full control finally of defence, foreign affairs, communications, customs, currency and exchange, etc." (Madras, April 1941.)

In the first place, is this demand anti-imperialist or not? It is quite clear that the League objective aims at complete elimination of British Imperialism, at complete independence—exactly the same as the objective of the Congress. Further-

more, recent utterances of League leaders make it quite clear that the independence visualised in the Pakistan objective is to be wrested from British Imperialism. Read the speeches of League leaders at the Delhi and Karachi sessions of the League and you will see this trend clearly. They recognise that there can be no sovereignty for them without the freedom of India as a whole.

As early as May 1940, Mr. Jinnah declared:

"Our ideals presuppose Indian freedom and independence and we shall achieve India's freedom far more quickly by agreeing to the underlying principle of the League resolution than by any other method."

Again, there are some Congressmen who in their blindness deny that Pakistan is the real demand of the Muslims. They point out to the North-West Frontier Province and say that Pathans, under Congress influence, do not want Pakistan. This is not at all the correct position.

It is a fact that the most important Frontier Congressmen including Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Mr. Abul Qaiyum, M.L.A., stand for the right of self-determination. They have said so in public statements, they have passed resolutions to this effect in the Frontier Provincial Congress Committee just before the August (1942) session of the A.I.C.C. It is also a fact that the League has increased its influence in the Frontier mainly because of its slogan of Pakistan.

As to the rest of the country no one with the slightest sense of reality can deny that the Muslim League carries with it the support of the overwhelming majority of Muslims both in provinces where they are in a numerical majority and where they constitute a minority. And the slogan of Pakistan, is as dear to the heart of a Muslim, as that of Swaraj to those under Congress influence.

IS IT VIVISECTION?

Though anxious to concede the just demands of the Muslims many Congressmen think that Pakistan is not in the true interests of the country. To them it is vivisection—a weakening of the nation by cutting it up into bits. But how do they propose to maintain the unity and strength of India?

How can they deny the right of Muslims living in compact areas and in big majorities to frame their own future, to be the masters of their own destiny? Is it conceivable that the Frontier Pathans, or Baluchis, or Sindhis or Punjabi Muslims can be kept together in a free India against their wish and desire? Let Congressmen give a clear answer.

Is the Constituent Assembly, which is to frame the constitution of free India going to declare that it will *forcibly* retain the Punjab, Sind, North-Western Frontier or Baluchistan

against the wishes of the citizens of those areas? Such a thing is not possible. Such an India will not have the ghost of a chance of survival as a free or united country. Such an attempt must lead to all the present-day evils—domination of weaker nationalities by the stronger, conflict, exploitation, slavery.

This conception of Indian unity is based on the denial of the fundamental right of self-determination to all nationalities. No Indian patriot who takes his stand on freedom can have anything in common with such an idea of unity. No freedom-loving Indian can deny the right of full sovereignty or that of forming a separate autonomous State to any compact group of people, that is, to any nationality.

It is precisely such a right to sovereign existence which is demanded in the Pakistan resolution. As such it does not deny, but carries forward the principles of Independence of every people which the Congress accepted at Lahore in 1929 —and which has been reiterated year after year since 1930 by hundreds of thousands of our countrymen. It is the very basis of our national demand, the very core of our democratic belief. It cannot be rejected without rejecting the right of self-determination for all.

The right to form a separate State, the right to secede, guaranteed under a common constitution or by treaties, is the one and only guarantee of unity on the basis of equality, unity of all nationalities for a common purpose—unity because there will be no fear of domination of one nationality by another, unity which will be based on mutual help and collaboration among free and equal peoples.

This is precisely the lesson we learn from the U.S.S.R. There the establishment of Socialism having eliminated the very basis of exploitation of man by man, and of oppression *of one nation by another, it has been found that the tie which* keeps the nationalities of the U.S.S.R. together is the right to secede from the Union vested in each of the 15 Constituent Republics. Even though each republic has now got the right to keep its own national army and control its own foreign relations, it does not mean disintegration but a further strengthening of the bonds of unity between the free nations of the *Soviet Union.*

Such unity and collaboration is acclaimed by the entire Muslim League opinion. Not only is it not ruled out but is actually visualised by the leadership of the League. Mr. Jinnah, refuting the charge that Pakistan would not shoulder the responsibility of defending India says:

> "*Let us, therefore, live as good neighbours; let the Hindus guard the South and the West and let the Muslims*

guard the Frontiers (i.e., North West and East). We will then stand together and say to the world ' Hands off India —India for Indians.' " *(Aligarh, March* 10, 1941)

The fact is that the moment the right of secession is mentioned some people begin to visualise the lurid picture of warring nationalities, of balkanisation. Actually behind this lurks the imperialist consciousness—that India can only be kept together forcibly. Why should it be so? The perfect application of democracy should mean equality and mutual understanding among peoples, it should lead to mutual collaboration and fraternal unity among them.

Through the sheer logic of its democratic stand, the Indian National Congress has consistently moved towards the acceptance of the League demand. The declaration by the Congress Working Committee, after the Cripps negotiations *that Congress does not think in terms of forcibly retaining any territorial unit in the Union of a Free India,* brought Congress and League very close to each other.

TOWARDS UNITY

The Jagat Narain Lal resolution passed at the Allahabad session of the A.I.C.C. was a hasty and thoughtless step, and it was recognised as such by all thinking Congressmen including the Congress leadership. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, officially and in writing, reasserted that the position taken by the Congress in its Delhi resolution remained in force.

In the August (1942) resolution of the A.I.C.C. the assignment of residuary powers to provinces was also a step in the direction of accepting the right of self-determination.

It is therefore absurd and contrary to truth to assert that Congress takes up the position of Akhand Hindustan as some misguided Congressmen and some embittered Muslim Leaguers seem to imagine.

Why should not the next and logical step be therefore taken—the acceptance of the principle of Pakistan, i.e., the concrete application of the principle of self-determination to the Muslim peoples of India? Not to do so is to split the national movement, is to vivisect India, to repudiate freedom itself.

To-day it means to keep the deadlock on, to watch helplessly the death through famine and disease of millions of our fellow-countrymen, to allow the bureaucracy to rule, to witness the total collapse of our national economy and social life, to lay open our frontiers to the depradations of the Japanese bandits.

The League too must learn the bitter lesson of the past two years.

It must also realise that millions of our countrymen have perished, in the regions of Pakistan itself, and that today we are in a helpless position because there is no Congress-League unity, because Congress leaders are in jail, because the League has not done its duty by exerting itself to get them out.

It must realise that the position of bargaining between Congress and Government, is unworthy of a great national organisation, and will lead not to Pakistan but to the continuation of our slavery.

It should be quite clear that Pakistan cannot be translated into reality, unless Congress is won over, unless a settlement is made with it.

To conclude: Pakistan must be thought of as a child of the Independence resolution passed in 1929 by the Congress. It is in the best traditions of the Congress to welcome this awakening national consciousness of brother nationalities, to recognise their just democratic demand, and then to end once and for all the present unhappy epoch of disunity, discord and deadlock.

(From *People's War*, March 19, 1944)

Muslim Masses Desire Unity

(Review of the Delhi Session of the Muslim League, April 1943)

The first sitting of the open session of the All-India Muslim League was held on the morning of 24th April. The most remarkable thing about this was the three-hour extempore address of the President, Mr. Jinnah, delivered in English. The vast audience—estimated to be between 25 to 30 thousand—among whom were 400 members of the Muslim League Council, and 1,500 delegates from all over the country who patiently sat through the whole address—a testimony to the feelings of reverence and affection which they bear for their leaders.

What are the points which stand out in the address of Mr. Jinnah? First and foremost, the realisation that unity between the Hindus and the Mussalmans is the supreme need of the hour.

> "Nobody will welcome it more than myself if Mr. Gandhi is now really willing to come to a settlement with the Muslim League. Let me tell you that that will be the greatest day both for Hindus and Muslims."

Hindu-Muslim unity is "the problem of problems," said Mr. Jinnah. The "wretched British Government" follows a policy of *divide and rule. It takes advantage of our follies.*

> "But we have devices of our own which are better than any devices that the British Government can fashion to keep us disunited. Can't we say 'Unite, unite, and unite,' and get the British out?"

He appealed to the Hindu public:

> "If you want to win the freedom of the peoples of this land, we the Muslims shall be in the vanguard of that struggle. It is your responsibility to come forward and say 'Stop this internecine war; declare a truce; let us sit as two equals and come to a settlement.'"

PLEA FOR SETTLEMENT

Each sentence uttered by Mr. Jinnah for unity evoked warm response from the audience. It was obvious that the extremely critical condition in which our country finds itself

today—saddled with a thoroughly incompetent and wooden bureaucracy on the one hand, and threatened with fascist invasion on the other—was moving the Muslim masses towards unity. Mr. Jinnah's address reflected this. Never before, in recent times, had he expressed himself so strongly and positively for the need of unity between the Congress and the League. Never had he shown such deep anxiety for Hindu-Muslim settlement.

But it is not sufficient *to feel for* unity ; it is not enough to *desire* unity. Unity must be wrought and fashioned, it has to be built. *How did Mr. Jinnah propose to do so?* Did he realise his great responsibility in this respect? He devoted nearly one hour in his long discourse to prove that so far as he was concerned he had, ever since the beginning of his political career, tried to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity. He paid glowing tributes to Gokhale and to Dadabhai Naurojee, at whose feet he had sat, and from whom he had drawn inspiration. But, Mr. Jinnah said, Congress under the leadership of Mr. Gandhi was "holding up the attainment of freedom for both Hindus and Muslims" Gandhiji and the Hindu leadership aimed not at freedom for all but for "Hindu Raj." Did Mr. Jinnah realise that going all out like this, against Gandhiji and Congress, he was queering the pitch for unity, that he was unnecessarily embittering relations when there was the need for utmost friendliness and cordiality between the two great organisations and their leaders? Was this the best way to get Congress and the Congress masses accept the Muslim right of self-determination? *I was reminded of the Allahabad and Bombay Sessions of the All-India Congress Committee when some Congress leaders, while emphasising the need for unity, and while expressing their willingness to start negotiations and come to terms with the League, attacked the Muslim League in a similar fashion.*

Mr. Jinnah referred to the appeal issued by the Communist Party to the Muslim League. "The Communist Party," he said, "seems to be the most active party these days, but the statement of facts in their appeal is fundamentally wrong." We had said in our appeal that opinion in the country had moved towards acceptance of the principle of self-determination ; that even Gandhiji in his letter to the Viceroy showed anxiety about the Hindu-Muslim question ; that the League must take the initiative to demand the release of Congress leaders and break down the barriers created by Imperialism to divide brother from brother. Mr. Jinnah said that, in his view, no change had taken place *in Congress or Hindu opinion.* But here again he made an advance from his former immutable position.

"Mr. Gandhi gets all the information and knows what is going on. What is there to prevent him from writing direct to me? Who is there that can prevent him from doing so? What is the use of going to the Viceroy? Strong as the Government may be in this country, I cannot believe for a single moment that they will have the daring to stop such a letter if it is sent to me. It would be a very serious thing indeed if such a letter were stopped."

This statement was greeted with loud cheers. I felt that in spite of everything, in spite of the mutual mistrust and misunderstanding, unity was the very logic of our national life and it was asserting itself. Hints were also thrown to the non-Party leaders that they should adopt "more effective methods" "Great men also make mistakes." What Mr. Jinnah meant was that it was no use approaching the Viceroy, without first forging Hindu-Muslim unity.

OPPOSITION TO BUREAUCRACY

The attitude of the British Government in not parting with power came in for unequivocal condemnation.

"The British in resisting the Congress say they are protecting the Muslims. We say: Nothing of the kind. We don't believe that you love us....Lord Linlithgow and Mr. Amery are *pucca* die-hard brand. The Muslim League and every other party is ignored....So far as Muslim India is concerned our cup of bitterness is brimful."

Hearing Jinnah speak thus I could almost hear the echoes of the Bombay Session of the A.I.C.C., of the angry speeches of Nehru and Azad. Mr. Jinnah was no less emphatic in regard to this war.

"Is it more in the interest of the British and the United Nations or in our interest that we should not be reduced to the role of mere spectators? If this war is lost we shall come under the jackboots of Hitler or Mussolini. They (the British and Americans—*Ed.*) can go to London and Chicago. Where shall I go? Who is more interested to fight and win this war? It will be our homelands which will be devastated by the aggressors.... But I don't want to be a camp-follower. The attitude of the British is like that of a gambler who says, 'If we win we keep them where they are; if we lose, *apres moi le deluge!*' (After me the deluge.)"

But it is not enough for an Indian patriot to realise the implications of this war; it is not enough to prove your case against the "stupid" imperialists. It is necessary to consider this war as our own and to take its direction out of the hands of the imperialists and put it into people's hands. This

can only be done by forging national unity. This is exactly the point missed by the Congress leadership in August 1942; the League unfortunately was acting similarly.

Another very important aspect of the address was the reference to the democratic basis of the future Pakistan.

> "The people of Pakistan will choose their representatives to the Constitution-making body on the basis of adult franchise....Democracy is in our blood, our marrow. I could not work for a single day if I thought I was working for the capitalists and landlords who fatten on the sweat of our people. In Pakistan exploitation will not be allowed. If the capitalists and landlords are wise they will have to adjust themselves to the new and the modern conditions. If they don't, God help them! We shall not."

Very naturally, this portion of the address was the most popular among the rank and file of the Muslim Leaguers. Talking to me they would say that Pakistan would be a Socialist State and quote Mr. Jinnah. I am not certain if the Nawabs, the Rajas and the Knights—of whom there is an abundance even in the Working Committee of the League—appreciated this portion of the Quaid-e-Azam's speech equally enthusiastically. Anyway they must have been glad that Mr. Jinnah persuaded Dr. Abdul Hamid Kazi, and Mr. Abdul Majid Sindhi, to withdraw their resolutions which laid down these principles more concretely. This was, I was assured, "in the interests of Muslim solidarity." *Yet the whole episode marks a big step forward for the League and shows unmistakably the growing radical trend of Muslim opinion in general.*

RESOLUTIONS

The second sitting of the open session was held at night, beginning at 10.30 p.m.—the usual time for meetings in Delhi to begin. Now the gathering had swelled to nearly 50,000. The night was cool and pleasant and the brilliantly-lit pandal was nearly full.

The resolutions taken up were concerning (1) The Black Bill in South Africa (2) Food and Essential Commodities (3) Collective Fines (4) Sind Martial Law and (5) Pir Pagaro's properties.

Mr. Jinnah had characterised the impending South African legislation against Indians as "the blackest of black acts." The resolution demanded that the British Government should intervene in the matter.

The resolution on food and supply of essential commodities was a vehement denunciation of the policy pursued by Government which was leading to "corruption, black market and exploitation of the people."

Sir Ziauddin Ahmad moved the food resolution and

Mr. Hussain Imam seconded it.

Mr. Hussain Imam is from Bihar, and there the Muslim Leaguers are joining and forming People's Food Committees. No wonder he spoke as a true people's tribune. The League resolution opens up unlimited possibility of joint work with the Muslim League on the food issue.

The resolution on Collective Fines demanded from the Government that Muslims should be exempted from collective fines and collective security orders. It is an unsatisfactory resolution in so far as it fails to protest against the entire policy of the Government in levying collective fines at all, which is sapping the morale of our impoverished peasantry at such a critical time, and as such is a menace to the country as a whole.

The resolutions demanding the withdrawal of Martial Law in Sind and protesting against the execution of the Pir Pagaro was moved and seconded by Sind Muslim League ministers who exposed the hollowness of provincial autonomy there.

More than half of the political resolution was a quotation from the League Working Committee resolution passed on August 20, 1942, at Bombay, wherein a protest was lodged against the attitude of the British Government which "completely ignored" the offer of the League to shoulder the burden of defence of the country, if real power was transferred to it; the Cripps offer was criticised because it virtually conceded the Congress demand and "merely recognised the possibility of establishing Pakistan supposed to be implicit in the non-accession scheme." A demand was made by the League that the right of self-determination, namely, Pakistan, must be forthwith recognised by the British Government in clear and unequivocal terms. The last two paragraphs of the resolution—which have been newly added—affirmed that if a Federal Constitution is imposed on India by the British Government, it would be resisted by the Muslims, resulting in "strife, bloodshed, and misery, responsibility for which will rest on the British Government alone." And lastly, Muslims of India were reminded that "the attainment of the goal of Pakistan is only possible by the untiring efforts, willing sacrifices and grim determination of the Muslims, and therefore, they should do their utmost to acquire the strength requisite for such an undertaking."

As I listened to the fire and thunder speeches of the League leaders who spoke on this resolution, I was reminded strongly of the last fateful Session of the A.I.C.C. held in Bombay. Here, too, there was an inability to understand that this was our own war, that the primary duty of defending this land is ours and that it is absurd to say that some one else

would not let us defend our country; here, too, the other great patriotic organisation (in this case, Congress) and its leadership were cold-shouldered as if they could be ignored, and dark hints were thrown out against "obdurate" imperialists that some sort of "action" would be taken; here too, people were asked to be ready to sacrifice their lives, "not mere jail going,"—no matter what the Congress or the Hindus thought about it I could not forget that the Muslim League's main grouse against the Congress and Gandhiji was that they said "freedom first and unity afterwards."

Now they were preaching exactly on the same lines before the Muslim masses! Congress leaders too had said that unity with the League was not possible because the latter did not want independence. League leaders repeated the same charge against the Congress.

LESSONS

Has the bitter experience of the last ten months taught nothing to the League leaders? Are they going to repeat the same mistakes which the Congress leaders committed in August? Will they not realise that today forging the unity of the people, active living unity, of all our countrymen, for food, for defence, for joint national government is the only way out of the *impasse?*

It is a good and a fine thing, a happy augury, for Indian Muslims and for India as a whole that the Muslim League continues to grow and gather round it millions of our liberty-loving people. But the ultimate test with which Muslims and Indians generally will judge the League will be whether it is able to solve the immediate problems which face us—the problems of defence, of food, of self-determination and national freedom. The only way in which this problem can be solved is unity of the two great patriotic parties of our land—the axis round which all our people can be mobilised to face with their own mighty strength the perils and dangers which threaten them all. It is obvious that if the League does not move and work for unity, if it continues to blame the other party, its threat of "*struggle*" and "*action*" would lead to disruption in its own camp as it did in the case of the Congress. Pressure tactics would only demoralise the Muslim masses on the one hand, and would open the door for defeatism and entry into the Executive Council as junior partners of the imperialists, on the other. Real transfer of power will not take place.

Yet there is no doubt whatsoever that the Muslim masses desire unity; they are ripe for unity and their sentiment is reflected in the leadership as well. Mr. Jinnah himself has moved very much forward towards unity.

The whole thing now hinges on the acceptance of the principle of self-determination of nationalities by non-Muslims and on the success of the demand to move on the part of the Muslim League for the release of Congress leaders.

(*From People's War, May* 9, 1943.)

The League Council Meets At Delhi

(November 1943)

Out of a total membership of nearly 500, less than 100 members of the All-India Muslim League Council attended its session which was held on the 14th and 15th November in the Arabic College Hall, Delhi. The hall was bare. There were no slogans or streamers on the walls and not even one flag of the Muslim League was to be seen anywhere. Even in the visitors' gallery the attendance was thin, 150 to 200 persons or even less.

League Ministries rule in the five Muslim provinces, the influence of the League on the Muslim masses—reflected in the sweeping victories which the League has been winning in all the recent bye-elections—in Sindh, in the N.WF.P., in Bengal —is increasing ; and yet when the highest body of the League between two all-India sessions—the League Council—meets, no enthusiasm is roused and very few members take the trouble of participating in its deliberations!

To anyone who attended the last session of the League Council this must have seemed a strange contradiction. The explanation for this fact—the growing popularity of the League on the one hand and the poor attendance at its Council meeting—a meeting which *Dawn* characterised as "historic," was not difficult to find.

JINNAH'S SPEECH

Mr. Jinnah made a short statement after his unanimous re-election as President for the next session of the League. He was touched by the confidence and affection shown to him by the members who spoke on the motion condemning the recent attack on his person made by a man alleged to be a Khaksar.

He said that it was right that election of the president and office-bearers should take place every year so that they may be of good behaviour. The League's constitution was most democratic. "If you disapprove of any policy pursued by the leader the remedy is in your hands. We are all creatures of your will. We are here with your approval."

He deprecated the cult of the knife and gangster methods and said that a no-confidence motion carried by the League Council could remove him from his office in 24 hours.

Coming to the political situation in the country, Mr. Jinnah declared that nothing new had happened on the political horizon of India since the last session of the All-India Muslim League (April, 1943); therefore all that he could do was to restate the present position "to refresh the memory" of the members.

He ridiculed the new arguments advanced to establish the geographical unity of India by the Imperialists, or by the "Akhand Hindustan-wallas." He made a bitter attack against the Tory die-hards in Britain "who do not wish to release their hold over this country; whose sole aim and object is to keep the Hindu and the Muslim under their yoke."

He then explained, with a great deal of warmth, that "the whole basis of Pakistan is freedom for both Hindus and Muslims... You cannot have Pakistan without the Hindus getting Hindustan and their freedom." He then went on to plead for a settlement on this basis. "We are playing in the hands of our common foe by not uniting." He pleaded with Hindus to accept the League proposal as a basis for negotiations and ended by saying that if this was not done "it will be a disastrous policy for which we will all rue the day."

As to Bengal he laid the entire responsibility at the doors of the bureaucracy. "This man-made famine was the greatest blot on the British administration in India." He defended the Nazimuddin ministry which was like a fire-brigade, "trying to extinguish the conflagration in Bengal," and ended up by an appeal to *all Indians, irrespective of political differences,* to come to the aid of Bengal.

It was apparent from Mr. Jinnah's references to the British Government that he understood fully its policy of not parting with power; *he also realised that without a political settlement* between Hindus and Muslims (by which he meant Congress and League) *no advance was possible.* But beyond asserting that Pakistan should be accepted as a basis for this settlement, *he had nothing more to say.* He said no word demanding the release of the Congress leaders. In fact he suggested no way out of the present deadlock.

What does this policy amount to? The League leaves the political *initiative in the hands of the imperialists,* which is admittedly leading to ruin and disaster, to actual annihilation of millions of our countrymen.

This lack of initiative and of positive action to solve the political and economic crisis was also apparent from the attitude which the League leaders took over the food question.

There is no doubt that the famine in Bengal has deeply stirred the Muslims of India and in the League Council itself opinions were expressed, during the course of the discussion on resolutions and amendments on the food question, which showed that Leaguers all over the country were positive that hoarding and profiteering must be put a stop to; that rationing and control must be introduced; that the Unionist ministry must conform to the policy laid down by the League in the matter of rationing and control and that the Central Government must adopt a definite, vigorous and uniform food policy for the procurement, control and distribution of food and other necessaries of life for the whole country.

AGAINST HOARDING, FOR CONTROL

For example, Sheikh Abdul Salam, President of the Delhi Provincial Muslim League, in the resolution which he moved on this question, declared among other things:

"*This meeting strongly condemns hoarding of foodstuffs and calls upon all the Provincial and primary Leagues to start campaigns against hoarders in each town and city and to see that no hoarding is done anywhere by anybody.*"

Hamid Nizami, ex-President, Punjab Muslim Students' Federation, in an amendment demanded the introduction of Rationing and Control to be worked in "consultation with the representatives of the people." In a vigorous speech he condemned the Punjab Ministry, and the Hindu, Muslim and British hoarders.

In spite of the fact that the Punjab Premier sought protection from the President and that detailed references to the doings of Sir Chhotu Ram could not be made, due to Mr. Jinnah ruling out of order specific references to the Punjab Ministry's doings, young Nizami drove his points home sharply. He drew loud cheers from the house, when he said that the League must fight "the united community of hoarders," hidden behind the Central and Provincial Governments, and demand the introduction of rationing and control everywhere, including the Punjab.

The greatest surprise of the day was when Sir Ghulam Hussein Hidayatullah, the Premier of Sind, put in a vigorous plea for control and rationing. He said that Mr. Jinnah and the League leadership could enforce this policy. "I request the Qaid-e-Azam to give the lead to the provinces to introduce rationing and control." It was freely rumoured that the Frontier Premier Sardar Aurangzeb Khan, and of course Sir Nazimuddin, also stood for the same policy.

The Punjab hoarders' representatives, lashed in this manner from all sides, put up Raja Ghazanfar Ali, a parliamentary

secretary in the Unionist Ministry, as their spokesman in the Council. I cannot think of a more hypocritical speech than the one which the Raja Saheb made. He made a violent attack against the Central Government (!) which he said was rotten and incompetent and could not manage to transport wheat from Punjab to Bengal. Not rationing and control, but "grow more food" was the remedy, he said.

His statement that the Punjab Muslim League had unanimously passed a resolution against rationing and control was challenged by Nizami, who said that the decision was of the Punjab League Working Committee, and even that was not unanimous. Mr. Jinnah also intervened and said that he had no knowledge of any such resolution. And the Raja drew contemptuous laughter from the audience when he said that if a National Government or the Qaid-e-Azam asked them to introduce control of prices they would do it. His last phrase was "Control is an enormous sin."

It was obvious that an overwhelming majority of members were of quite the contrary view; to them the hoarder was the greatest sinner and they did not want to show any mercy to him. Mr. Jinnah, however, took the view that the League Council need not give detailed instructions to the Central Government and ministries as to what they should do.

THE OFFICIAL STAND

He made it quite clear that he was not opposed to any of the measures proposed in Sheikh Abdul Salam's or Hamid Nizami's amendment. He said, however, that it was enough to call upon the Government of India "to adopt immediately more vigorous and effective measures to cope with the food problem in the country."

This was the crucial phrase in the official resolution moved by Nawab Ismail Khan (U. P.) which had the approval of the Working Committee and it was this resolution which was finally adopted.

Mr. Jinnah also explained that he was meeting the five League Premiers separately and was going to thrash out with them a uniform food policy. "So far as the five provinces are concerned," declared Mr. Jinnah, "Muslim Premiers are fully responsible....They are to formulate a common policy. Don't think that we are not doing all that we can."

The issue of Bengal, of course, dominated the entire session. The line officially put forward by the Working Committee was, on the one hand, to lay the entire blame for the famine at the doors of the Government of India and the British Government; on the other hand, to give unstinted support to the League Ministry and appeal to the Mussalmans all over India to "give their help to the people of Bengal in cash con-

tribution or in kind."

The Bengal Premier read out a long statement on the position of Bengal. It was quite obvious that his effort was to refute the charges of Mr. Amery and to prove conclusively that it is the policy of the Government of India which has led to the present catastrophe in Bengal. He gave a detailed account as to how each plan which the Government of India made to supply Bengal with food grains broke down; how the neighbouring provinces sabotaged the supply of grains to Bengal and the situation gradually became worse.

Sir Nazimuddin went on to argue the merits of an independent Bengal in Pakistan, of the efforts of the Ministry to obtain food grains from within and without, of the relief work that is being done in Bengal.

As I heard the statement of the Bengal Premier, read by him in a dull monotonous voice, with no reference at all to the League in Bengal; with its brushing aside of the hoarder as a "myth"; without any mention of the political situation and the need of an all-parties ministry; without any real picture of the millions who are faced with death due to starvation; with not even a word about the danger of Japanese air raids, I could not help imagining that it was a complacent bureaucrat and not the leader of Bengali Muslims who was speaking.

The people and their organisations, the need to rouse them, and through them to fight this pestilence which is devastating the green and pleasant land of Bengal—all this was not there at all. It is all very well to curse the Government of India and prove conclusively that Amery has no regard for truth. No Indian needs convincing about these matters. But what every Muslim expects from the League Council and the League leadership is the way out of these difficulties, this cobweb of bureaucratic maladministration, of disease and death.

LEAGUE TAKES NO INITIATIVE

And it is precisely this that the League leadership has so far failed to do. It does not mobilise the Muslim masses to fight the hoarder and the profiteer in co-operation with other popular parties; it does not lead the battle for unity by coming out strongly behind the demand for the release of the Congress leaders but is satisfied merely with stating its own position and demand. This is why the organisational development of the League, the organised power of Muslims to achieve self-determination and freedom, does not grow in the same measure as the general influence of the League.

The League passed a resolution banning the Khaksars from becoming members of the League, but its leaders do not see the political causes of this deplorable schism among the Muslims in the lack of positive action to solve the present

political deadlock.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan brought up this issue while speaking on the Lebanon resolution demanding the restoration of independence to that country. He said:

> *"The Arab countries—Muslim and Christian Arabs—are united today and there is no doubt that they will get what they want. If in our country Hindus and Muslims were also united and if Mr. Jinnah and Gandhiji meet and come to a settlement we would also be powerful."*

Among the younger Muslim Leaguers too, a realisation is growing that positive steps must be taken to get over the present difficulties. Undeterred by the pressure of Punjab Unionists (it is significant that both Sir Chhotu Ram and Baldeo Singh were present in Delhi at the time of the League Council meeting) the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim Students' Federation passed a resolution demanding *immediate price control of food grains, cloth and other necessaries of life.*

In the same resolution they said *that the present Central Executive has failed to solve this problem because of its unrepresentative character; therefore the Muslim League should be invited to form a popular Government at the Centre in co-operation with other representative parties.*

Talking informally to Muslim journalists, many members of the League Council and Muslim students, I was struck by their earnest desire to organise and build the League as a democratic mass organisation, by their keenness to work for a "free Islam in a free India."

> "We agree with you about many things," one League Council member told me, "and we would like the League to adopt forward policies. But what's the use of complaining? Unless we work among the Muslim masses, place our point of view before them and organise them in the League, how can we influence its policy?"

There is no doubt, that it is this trend that will continue to grow in the League.

(From *People's War*, November 28, 1943)

Among Muslim Nationalists

(November, 1943)

All kinds of things are imagined about the Muslim nationalists. Muslim Leaguers think it is they who are standing in the way of Congress-League settlement. Many Hindu Congressmen look upon them with feelings almost of pity which amounts to saying : You are good men, but you are of little use. You are ceasing to have much influence on the Muslim masses. You can't deliver the goods.

The Muslim nationalist is puzzled, depressed and unhappy. What is he to do ? There is no sacrifice which he has not made, no suffering which he has not undergone, in order that the land he lives in might be free of imperialist domination, in order that together with all other Indians, Muslims might prosper, might build a new life for themselves.

But if all this endeavour was to end in his increasing isolation from the Muslim masses, and if Hindu-Muslim unity remained unachieved, what was the use of it all ? Was there no way out of this impasse ? Could not the nationalist Muslims help in breaking the present political deadlock ?

At Delhi, in the first fortnight of November, I had occasion to meet many prominent and representative nationalist Muslims and discuss with them the present political situation.

Among them were Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim, former Congress Minister of U. P.; Mr. Abdulla Brelvi, Editor of the *Bombay Chronicle* ; Mr. Abdul Qaiyum, Congress M.L.A. (Central) of Peshawar ; Maulana Ahmed Saeed, Acting President, Jamiat-ul Ulema-i-Hind ; Maulana Mufti Kifayatullah, Member, Working Committee, Jamiat-ul-Ulema ; Dr. Shaukatullah Ansari, General Secretary, Azad Muslim Board and Mr. Muhammad Ahmed Kazmi, Ahrar leader and M.L.A. (Central) from U. P.

These names do not need introduction to any Indian acquainted with the Muslim politics of our country ; they are people who help to mould and form Nationalist Muslim thought today.

Ibrahim, Brelvi and Qaiyum represent the cream of Muslim Congressmen from U. P, Bombay and N. W. F. P. respectively ; the two Maulanas, old veterans of Khilafat days, venerated and respected by hundreds of thousands as Muslim

Divines and unbending anti-imperialists; young Shaukatullah who carries forward the great nationalist traditions of his uncle, the late Dr. Ansari; Mr. Kazmi, scion of a well-known *Muslim family of western U. P.—his father* one of the greatest Muslim educationists of India and both father and son staunch nationalists.

RED THREAD OF DISCUSSION

All these men met in Delhi, to discuss the present political situation. It is not my purpose to give here an account of these discussions—for they were informal and I am not authorised to do so. Still there are certain things which might be told without divulging any secrets.

It was Hafiz Ibrahim, who had just been released from jail, who took the initiative to call these people together and the main topic of discussion was Congress-League unity: how it could be brought about and in what way nationalist Muslims could be helpful in breaking the present political deadlock. Naturally the discussion turned on the question of self-determination and Pakistan.

And the one basic idea which ran like a red thread through the varying points of view, which were expressed there, was that never was Hindu-Muslim unity more urgent than today and that nothing would be better for the country than an agreement between Congress and Muslim League. It was recognised that this was the key to the deadlock.

Another thing which emerged out of this discussion was that while nationalist Muslims believed that free India should be one federation, they were nonetheless quite definite that the federating units should have the right of self-determination including that of separation. Both the Jamiat-ul-Ulema and Azad Muslim Board had passed resolutions corresponding to this position (Delhi, February 1942 *and Lahore, March* 1942 *respectively).*

It was pointed out that the Congress Working Committee had also come very near to this position when after the failure of the Cripps negotiations it passed a resolution saying that it cannot think in terms of compelling the people of any "territorial unit" to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will. "And since these 'units' would be formed mainly on the basis which you (i.e., Communists) are stating, there is really no essential difference between any of these positions," one of the participants in the discussions assured me.

DISPELLING ANTI-LEAGUE SUSPICIONS

But what about the League? *It is really at this point* that difficulties began to arise. Hardly one of those whose names I mention above believed that the League was really

keen to have a settlement with Congress.

"I would urge the Congress to concede even the Pakistan demand, if I were certain that it would mean settlement. But I don't believe Mr. Jinnah really wants a settlement. Look what he did when Gandhiji wrote to him from prison. He always finds an excuse not to come to terms with the Congress. The League thrives on opposition to the Congress. If a settlement were arrived at it would lose in influence with the Muslims"—this was the view expressed by one of those present.

In fact, the Muslim nationalist shares with his brother Congressman a deep-seated distrust against the League. I put it to them on the following lines:

> Would it not be better for the Muslim nationalists to come out clearly and unequivocally for self-determination and use their influence with Congressmen to do the same? The demand is a just and a democratic one. As soon as you do this you knock the bottom out of the distrust which the League patriot feels about the Congress. It at once strengthens the hands of those elements inside the League which want unity and enables them to swing the League as a whole to support the release of Congress leaders.
>
> The Congress accepting the right of self-determination of the Muslims wins the League as an ally in the joint front to end the deadlock and save the country from famine and fascist invasion. It is the historic task of the Muslim nationalists to bring about this decisive turning point in our country's destiny.

A QUESTION OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE

Talking to some prominent Muslim Leaguers I told them how very near nationalist Muslims were to them on the question of self determination: "They would support even the Pakistan demand if they were certain that it would mean settlement." My Muslim League friend was amazed. He could not imagine that there are people who think that even after conceding Pakistan, the League would not come to a settlement with the Congress. "What else can we demand?" was his surprised question. *I told him that it is not so much on the basic question of self-determination that differences now exist between the League, Congressite Muslims and a large number of Hindu Congressmen. It is really a question of creating mutual confidence.*

Two things stood out in the discussion *Firstly*, an intense realisation that through unity alone the next step forward in the political field could be taken, that only unity could give us the strength to snatch national government from imperialist reactionaries, that the only possible

basis of this unity could be self-determination; and *secondly*, side by side with willingness to do everything possible to bring about unity between the Congress and the League, there exists deep-seated mistrust of the League, a feeling that howsoever much we may try, the League would always prove intractable.

It is because of this latter feeling that I noticed a certain helplessness, a lack of self-confidence, expressing itself in such thoughts as these: "What is the use of our doing anything at all? The League and its followers would not listen to us, and we might be misunderstood by Congressmen who may dub us as 'communalists.' Besides, Congress leaders are in jail, nothing that we can do can get them out. Congress-League settlement is possible only when Congress leaders come out. Let us. therefore, wait till then."

It is painful to hear patriots who have devoted all their life in the service of the country talk in this strain. But this is no more the dominant strain amongst many.

I believe Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim is going to play an important role in rallying nationalist Muslims to work for Hindu-Muslim unity on the basis of self-determination. Imagine what a tremendous transformation it means: a former Congress Minister, who was particularly disliked by the U. P. Leaguers, now takes the lead in the campaign for unity!

As he has just been released from prison, I asked him what was the prevailing mood of his fellow-Congressmen in jail.

"All are anxious to be out and keen that the deadlock must be broken. How this is to be done they don't yet know. But I know that any positive step taken by us outside in that direction will have their support."

(From *People's War*, December 1943)

League At The Cross-Roads

A Review of the Karachi Session

(December 1943)

A huge procession which took almost an hour and a quarter to pass through the gaily decorated streets of Karachi, 1,500 Khaki and grey-clad Muslim National Guards drawn from all over India, Muslim students and Muslim children's squads, Muslim League leaders and Ministers in a train of one hundred motor cars, the enormous camel-drawn chariot of Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah, surrounded by scores of Sindhi horsemen and camel drivers—picture all this, and then think of the handful of individuals who attended the first session of the Muslim League which was also held at Karachi 36 years ago in the year 1907.

"This procession," said Mr. Jinnah, while unfurling the green flag of the League, "is the symbol of the unity and strength of the Muslims."

The League as an organisation has had its ups and downs, but who could deny that to-day it represents the hopes and aspirations of millions of Indian Muslims, who, as every year passes, rally more and more round it, whose love and devotion and respect for their leader Jinnah knows no bounds.

The three most popular slogans, those which were taken up by the crowds in the procession and the audience during the League session, were "Pakistan Zindabad!" "Muslim League Zindabad!" and "Qaid-e-Azam Zindabad!" What do these slogans symbolise? *Pakistan*, the objective of the Muslims to live freely in their Indian homelands; *Muslim League*, their national organisation and *Qaid-e-Azam*, the leader and the builder of the League, who is to lead them to freedom and independence.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Mr. Jinnah's presidential address was listened to by the delegates with rapt attention. Loudest applause and cheers from the audience came when British bureaucratic designs to deprive Indians of political power by all kinds of dishonest methods were denounced by Mr. Jinnah. He made it clear that the League stood for the freedom of both Muslims (Pakistan) and Hindus, that it wanted complete independence for the whole country.

"There is no truth in the suggestion that we are welcoming British Raj." To say that the League did not want independence was "sinister, vicious and wicked propaganda against the League."

Mr. Jinnah argued that by not coming to a settlement with the League, it was really the Congress which barred the way to Indian independence. Obviously Mr. Jinnah believes that the united strength of the League and the Congress can force the British Imperialists to come to terms with the Indian people. But from the tone of his remarks about the Congress, it was clear that he did not, at present, see the possibility of unity.

According to him there was no change in the attitude of of the Congress, and millions of Congressmen who were outside jail had not shown any sign of change. Having reached this conclusion Mr. Jinnah advised his followers to depend on their own "inherent strength and to prepare for action to achieve Pakistan."

The outline in the presidential address about the need for a Committee of Action to organise the Muslim League took the concrete shape of a resolution of the session, which was moved by Chaudhuri Khaliquzzaman, the next evening (24th December). Sardar Aurangzeb Khan, the Frontier Premier, Mr. Nashtar, Frontier League Minister, and Sheikh Karamat Ali, M.L.A. (Punjab) supported the resolution. In all the speeches two trends emerged very clearly. On the one hand, the case for Pakistan was argued. Chaudhuri Sahab said: "Muslims do not want Pakistan to oppress Hindu minorities but because they do not wish to live under permanent Hindu domination." Aurangzeb Khan said: "Muslims want freedom in their own six provinces while the Hindus can have theirs in the other six. We will not only be fair and just to the minorities inhabiting Pakistan, we will be generous."

The second trend in all these speeches was to ask the Muslims to rouse themselves and get organised for *direct action against the British Government*—"the struggle that is shortly to come for the achievement of Pakistan." The Frontier Minister Nashtar (an ex-Congressman) came out strongly in the same strain. "Our main enemy is the British Government and not the Hindus."

HOPELESSNESS AND FRUSTRATION

Just like the last League session at Delhi (April, 1943), it was clear that having come to a dead end on the question of unity, that is, having concluded that the advance towards self-determination and National Government was not possible through uniting with the Congress, the only alternative left was to ask people "to prepare to die for Pakistan."

The period between the Delhi and Karachi sessions is a

period when, according to a League spokesman, except for a few disappointing speeches from imperialist statesmen, "nothing has happened." Congressmen and the British Government both follow a policy of "no change" towards the Muslims.

So hopelessness grows and from hopelessness is born desperation, an exact replica of the situation inside the Congress ever since the failure of the Cripps negotiations up to the fateful August (1942) session of the A.I.C.C.

There too, the path of advance through unity with the League was rejected; the British Government remained adamant. Frustration and desperation created a situation which played into the hands of the imperialists. The defence of the country against the Jap Fascists was jeopardised, our biggest national organisation, the Congress, was paralysed; our people became helpless victims of famine, disease and pestilence.

I was anxious to know the reactions of the League delegates to Mr. Jinnah's address and to these speeches. In the Delegates' Camp at Haroonabad a responsible office bearer of a provincial Muslim League told me: "Of course, we cannot launch a struggle. When the Congress has been crushed by the British Government, the League stands no chance of success."

I asked him what he expected the Committee of Action to do. He did not seem to know. Mr. Jinnah in his address had talked of a permanent secretariat of the League; he had said that the committee would organise the League and co-ordinate plans of social, economic and political uplift. This was alright. But there was a big difference between this and the "action" which was referred to by the speakers on the Committee of Action resolution.

The fact that this Committee of Action could help the proper organisation of the League in the provinces, ensure regular enrolment of membership and enforce democratic functioning, that it could curb the selfish, landlord and money-making interests and help to enforce League policies for the benefit the people at large—this fact seemed to have been missed by many delegates who were confused about the exact functions of this committee.

I found similar misgivings about the formation of the Parliamentary Board among some delegates from the Punjab and Bengal. Some of them expressed the fear that the Parliamentary Board would help the Ministries to flout the wishes of the Provincial League organisation. In the last meeting of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League, Sir Nazimuddin had declared that the League Assembly Party was not obliged to carry out the policies laid down by the Bengal Provincial

League; an attempt had also been made by the Ministerialist group to sabotage the formation of a Bengal Provincial Muslim League Relief Committee. But the Provincial League snubbed the Ministerialists on both these points.

Was this another attempt to bypass the Provincial League? I remembered that during the time of the Congress Ministries too, similar situations had arisen. There was an attempt by the vested interests in the Ministries to avoid the popular control of the Provincial organisation and seek refuge in the protection of the top leadership.

DEMOCRATIC TRENDS

The resolution moved by Mr. Z. A. Lari, suggesting the appointment of a Committee to formulate a five-year plan for the economic and social uplift of the Muslims and industrialisation in Pakistan zones, was meant precisely to give a definite programme to the Ministries.

Mr. Lari demanded that free compulsory education for all should be introduced by League Ministries and that "landlordism created in our country by the British to plunder the people should be abolished and peasants should be free." He advocated the development of industries owned by the State so that the workers' lot might be improved.

Mr. Tamizuddin, the Bengal Minister, commended the Soviet Union where industry had been nationalised.

Hamid Nizami from Lahore denounced the Nawabs, Sirs and Khan Bahadurs in the League and said that the League must work for the masses so that it may really become a people's organisation.

The resolution moved by Mr. Hussain Imam, demanded control of prices and rationing of all necessities of life. By raising this slogan in this form, the hoarders and vested interests in the Punjab and Sind, are still striving to sidetrack the question of control and rationing of foodstuffs immediately.

However, I had no doubt in my mind that an overwhelming majority of League delegates want immediate rationing and control, and they detest the politics pursued by the Sind and Punjab Ministries. In private conversation, bitter attacks were made by many important Bengal delegates against vested interests which are putting pressure on the Bengal Ministry. They were dissatisfied that the Bengal famine question had not been adequately brought forward on the League platform. But the League Relief Committee workers were incessantly moving among prominent League leaders and among other delegates. They distributed a passionate appeal for relief to Bengal and succeeded in collecting as much as Rs. 75,000 for their Committee.

During the three days of the League Session, I had been

constantly moving among the delegates, talking and discussing with them. I found among most of them an earnest and eager desire to build and organise the League as a popular organisations, to see that democratic functioning is enforced, that reactionary and vested interests are not able to influence the League, that the Ministries really become popular Ministries. They are keen to extend civil liberties.

The League stands at the cross-roads. To the extent that it pursues popular and democratic policies, to that extent its influence, strength and organisation will grow and unity with other patriotic parties brought nearer. If, however, the democratic urge in the League, patent at the Karachi Session, does not get the upper hand but is smothered by the vested interests hiding behind the Ministers, in Sind, Frontier, Bengal and Punjab, it will be face to face with a dangerous situation which can only end in its weakening. And that is a possibility which no patriotic Indian can view with equanimity, for in the increased strength and capacity of the League to move the Muslim masses on the path of progress and democracy lies the salvation of millions of our Muslim countrymen and the possibility of Congress-League unity.

(From *People's War*, January 9, 1944)

Appendices

I

THE AIM OF THE LEAGUE

Resolution incorporated in Section 2(a) of the Constitution of the All-India Muslim League defining its aims and objects, passed at the Madras Session of the All-India Muslim League held in April 1941:

> Resolved that the following amendment be made in the aims and objects of the All-India Muslim League and for Section 2(a) of the Constitution and Rules of the All India Muslim League the following be substituted:
>
> (i) The establishment of completely Independent States formed by demarcating geographically contiguous units into regions which shall be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Mussalmans are numerically in a majority, as in the North-western and Eastern zones of India, shall be grouped together to constitute Independent States as Muslim Free National Homelands in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign;
>
> (ii) That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in the above mentioned units and regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them;
>
> (iii) That in other parts of India where the Mussalmans are in a minority, adequate, effective, and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for them and other minorities for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them.

II

THE PAKISTAN RESOLUTION

The "Pakistan" Resolution passed at the annual session of the All-India Muslim League held at Lahore, in March 1940:

> Resolved that it is the considered view of this Session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan

would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute "Independent States" in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.

That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in these units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them and in other parts of India where the Mussalmans are in a minority adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for them and other minorities for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them.

This Session further authorises the Working Committee to frame a scheme of constitution in accordance with these basic principles, providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs and such other matters as may be necessary.

III

THE LUCKNOW RESOLUTION ON "FULL INDEPENDENCE"

Resolution passed at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim League incorporating a change in the aims and objects of the League, (Lucknow 1937):

Resolved that the object of the All-India Muslim League shall be the establishment in India of full Independence in the form of a federation of free democratic states in which the rights and interests of the Mussalmans and other minorities are adequately and effectively safeguarded in the constitution.

IV

RESOLUTION ON THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE

Resolution on food and other necessities of life passed at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim League, held at Delhi in April 1943:

Whereas the Government is responsible for the supply of the necessities of life to the people of India especially during wartime when the movements of merchandise are controlled entirely by the Government, whereas the marked disparity between the prices fixed by the Government for their own purchases and the prices at which the civil population is forced to buy the same articles is against all sound theories of economics and leads to corruption, black markets and exploitation of the people, whereas the policy of control as devised and practised by the capitalists, traders and manufacturers in the name of the Government has failed to achieve its purpose and is encouraging hoarding and abnormal profiteering and causing misery to the people in general and to the poorer classes in particular, the Muslim League urges on the Government of India the necessity of framing their policy of control and distribution of the necessities of life not so much in consultation with the capitalists and officials as in consultation with the representatives of the people, and of ensuring that (1) the necessities of life are made available to the people and not locked up by the distributors, (2) they are sold at reasonable prices providing economic profit to the producers, (3) distributors are selected from all classes of the people (4) retail shops are opened in every quarter of the towns. The Muslim League further demands that the representatives of the people especially of the Muslim League should be associated with the officials and the capitalists at every stage in the planning and execution of the scheme of purchase and distribution.

V

RESOLUTION ON FOOD PASSED BY THE BENGAL PROVINCIAL MUSLIM LEAGUE

An important resolution passed by the Bengal Provincial Muslim League Council at its meeting in Calcutta on November 7, 1943 :

In order to implement the instructions of the All-India Muslim League, the Provincial League Council has decided :

(1) to establish non-official representative committees throughout Bengal with powers to organise the campaign against hoarders and profiteers ;

(2) to merge official relief committees with local food committees ;

(3) to organise the distribution of food-stuffs through these food committees ;

(4) to purchase the 'aman' crop in a proper way for

distribution;

(5) other necessities of life to be controlled successfully;

(6) In Municipal and Union areas government shops to be opened;

(7) strong action should be taken against profiteers in black-market and hoarders.

VI

APPEAL TO THE MUSLIM LEAGUE ISSUED AT THE TIME OF THE KARACHI SESSION BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

The annual session of your great organisation meets in the midst of the most gigantic famine crisis that has shaken this country.

It meets when national disintegration and collapse of national economy stare us in the face.

Bengal, the eastern bulwark of our country and of free Muslim nationalities, lies prostrate before hunger and death.

Bureaucratic incompetence and the hoarders' greed have sent to their deaths every week 75,000 Bengali men, women and children. They have wrecked thousands of Hindu and Muslim homes. They have made desolate large tracts of Bengal.

The entire country stands threatened with the fate of Bengal. The shadow of famine lengthens over the entire land. Privations, the precursor of famine, have become universal. The coming year will decide whether death is to triumph over us or whether we, the people, will triumph over it.

WHAT PATRIOTS DEMAND

At this critical juncture all eyes are turned to you and your great organisation.

You control ministries in five provinces.

You have got patriotic traditions behind you.

You command the loyalty of an ever-growing number of Muslims who have given you smashing successes in recent provincial by-elections.

Thanks to their solid support you stand today as a great popular force capable of leading the nation.

What does every Muslim, every Indian, expect you to do?

He demands that the League Ministries in the five provinces come forward as people's ministries to protect people's food against the selfish profiteer and the arrogant bureaucrat.

He demands that the League Ministries should lead

the battle against the hoarders, ensure control of stocks and prices, so that the poorer sections do not die of hunger, so that the hoarders' power to send people to death is smashed.

He demands, and he has every right to demand, on the basis of the very Islamic traditions of which you are justly proud, that rich and poor be treated alike in the matter of food, and therefore, rationing be immediately introduced, rationing which allows an equal quantity of food for each.

In short, he demands from you, from the ministries under your control, protection against hunger, starvation and death. He demands lower prices for food, cheap and sufficient food.

PRICE-CONTROL AND RATIONING

This is what the resolution of the Bengal League, of the League organisation at Dacca, of a number of Muslim students' organisations, unequivocally demand. *This was the unmistakable trend at the last session of the League Council at Delhi.*

The voice of Muslim India has decisively spoken in favour of price-control, control of stocks and rationing. The rest of India also demands it.

The League resolution of the April session promised the people that their food would be protected.

Unfortunately that resolution was not implemented. When the Bengal Ministry was fighting the battle for the very existence of the province, when the reputation of the League itself was at stake, the Unionist landlords of the Punjab were hoarding grain and demanding extortionate prices for their wheat.

The Punjab Ministry, not only did not fight this anti-popular policy but actually supported it. The Ministry, whose Premier is a member of the League, all along opposed rationing, price-control and control of stocks until Wavell beat it down. It bowed down to the bureaucracy, but would not carry out the mandate of the League session.

The vested interests in the League, the landlords and others, have conspired against the food of the poor man and in the Punjab openly adopted a policy of protecting the profiteer. They made the Ministry a tool to protect their own selfish interests.

Patriots of the League!

To allow such a policy to continue is to share with the hoarder and the bureaucrat the crime of starving our people. It disgraces the fair name of the League and discredits it before the people.

Your authoritative voice, the voice of the unchallenged leaders of Muslim opinion, must firmly warn the ministries

that no flouting of public opinion will be tolerated, no profiteering in people's food will be permitted. It must reassure the people that the battle for food is safe in your hands.

This is the first step. But this is not enough.

UNITY AND SELF-DETERMINATION

The starvation and death that rages around us cannot be effectively fought until India's political parties join hands, until a National Government, composed of Congress and League, is won and it comes forward to procure food for the people and defend our land.

The tens of thousands of deaths, the growing national disintegration, are the results of that arrogant denial of power, that policy of deadlock, of playing the League against the Congress and the Congress against the League, which the bureaucracy pursues with impunity.

The Indian people cannot march to freedom, the Indian *Muslim cannot* win self-determination, unless the policy of deadlock is defeated and the bureaucrats are compelled to negotiate for a National Government with the major parties —Congress and League.

That is why in your own and in the country's interest, in the interest of winning power and self-determination, it is your bounden duty to demand the release of Congress leaders, freedom for Congress organisation, so that they and you can unitedly take the country away from death and famine to food and freedom.

The policy of non intervention and neutrality adopted by *your organisation* has hit you and the people. Has it advanced self-determination? Has it brought freedom nearer? Has it even given food to the people?

India groans under the bureaucratic regime and you decline to open the way out.

Our hungry men and women, our people yearning for freedom and self-determination, call on you to rise to your patriotic traditions, as the protector of our people and demand unequivocally the release of Congress leaders. That one call will seal the doom of the bureaucracy and gather irresistible support for self-determination from Hindus and Muslims alike.

That call will be the death-knell of deadlock, of the policy which starves our people to death, and represses one section after another.

It will open the way for our gigantic unity, for a National Government of Congress and League at the Centre—a Government which alone can feed our people and defend them against the Jap aggressor.

We are glad that your organisation is daily increasing in strength.

The masses pin their faith on you in ever larger numbers. Self-determination instead of being looked upon as a scheme of dividing India is more and more being recognised as a democratic right.

Who will not rejoice at this growing strength of our second patriotic organisation?

At the same time every honest Leaguer must admit that everything has not been done to develop the League as the democratic mass organisation of Muslims.

The League must extend its mass basis. Its call must reach every Muslim home. Its policy must find an echo in every Muslim heart.

Let every Muslim know that the League protects his food, stands for price-control and rationing, for peasants' and workers' demands, for self-determination and India's freedom, for League-Congress unity and National Government—and the millions will rise to a man to build the League, obey its mandate and make it irresistible.

You who justly pride yourself on your spirit of independence and democracy born out of Islamic traditions, must know that the key to the freedom of Islamic countries lies in your hands.

Neither Palestine nor Iraq will be freed unless India is free and her Muslim nationals win self-determination.

India will not be free unless Congress and League in combination defeat bureaucracy and win immediate National Government.

KEY IN YOUR HANDS

The key to the freedom of the entire Islamic world is in your hands. That key is National Unity—Congress-League unity—to secure the release of Congress leaders and end the deadlock.

Not to unite is to be untrue to your professions of freedom and democracy. Not to unite is to work against both self-determination and freedom of India and of the other Islamic countries.

Not to unite to demand the release of Congress leaders is to remove the last hope of saving our people from death and starvation.

INDIA LOOKS TO YOU!

DEMAND THAT YOUR MINISTRIES ENSURE FOOD

TO THE PEOPLE THROUGH PRICE-CONTROL AND RATIONING.

ENSURE SELF-DETERMINATION TO YOUR PEOPLE BY DEMANDING RELEASE OF CONGRESS LEADERS FOR NATIONAL SETTLEMENT TO WIN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

MAKE THE LEAGUE A DEMOCRATIC MASS ORGANISATION OF THE MUSLIM PEOPLE WORTHY OF ITS GREAT PATRIOTIC TRADITIONS.

VII
CONGRESS STAND ON SELF-DETERMINATION

(i) *Extract from Resolution of Working Committee of the Indian National Congress, Delhi, April 2, 1942*

"The Congress has been wedded to Indian freedom and unity and any break in that unity, especially in the modern world when people's minds inevitably think in terms of ever larger federations, would be injurious to all concerned and exceedingly painful to contemplate. Nevertheless the Committee cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will. While recognising this principle, the Committee feel that every effort should be made to create conditions which would help the different units in developing a common and co-operative national life. The acceptance of the principle inevitably involves that no changes should be made which result in fresh problems being created and compulsion being exercised on other substantial groups within that area. Each territorial unit should have the fullest possible autonomy within the Union, consistently with a strong national State."

(ii) *Extract from Resolution of All-India Congress Committee, Bombay, August 7, 1942*

"....On the declaration of India's independence, a provisional Government will be formed and free India will become an ally of the United Nations sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The provisional Government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principal parties and groups in the country. It will thus be a composite Government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggres-

sion with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with its Allied Powers and to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The provisional Government will evolve a scheme for a constituent assembly which will prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one. With the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units and with the residuary power vesting in these units, the future relations between India and the Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it."

(iii) *Extract from Statement issued by meeting at Allahabad of U. P. Congress leaders on March 14, 1944*

We very much regret the growing estrangement of the leaders of the Muslim League towards the Congress and the cause of freedom for which it stands. We call the League's attention to the Congress Working Committee's Resolution of April 2, 1942, where the right of self-determination was specially recognised and assurance given that there would be no compulsion on the people of any territory to remain in the Indian Union.